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Caution recommended in the Use and Application of Scripture Language.

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SERMON

PREACHED JULY 15, 1777,

IN THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF CARLISLE,

AT THE

VISITATION

OF THE

RIGHT REVEREND

EDMUND,

LORD BISHOP OF CARLISLE.

K

By WILLIAM PALEY, M. A.

LATE FELLOW OF CHRIST COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, AND VICAR OF DALSTON AND ST. LAWRENCE IN APPLEBY.

THE THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed and sold by R. FAULDER, *New Bond Street*; *and* T. MERRIL, at *Cambridge*, 1787.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND

EDMUND

Lord Biſhop of Carliſle,

THESE

DISCOURSES

ARE INSCRIBED

With Sentiments of great Reſpect and Gratitude,

By his LORDSHIP'*s moſt dutiful,*

and moſt obliged Servant and Chaplain,

W. PALEY.

Caution recommended in the Uſe and Application of Scripture Language.

2 PET. iii. 15, 16.

Even as our beloved brother Paul alſo, according to the wiſdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as alſo in all his epiſtles ſpeaking in them of thoſe things; in which are ſome things hard to be underſtood, which they that are unlearned, and unſtable, wreſt, as they do alſo the other ſcriptures, unto their own deſtruction.

IT muſt not be diſſembled that there are many real difficulties in the Chriſtian ſcriptures; whilſt at the ſame time more, I believe, and greater, may juſtly be imputed to certain maxims of interpretation, which have obtained authority without reaſon, and are received without enquiry.—One of theſe, as I apprehend, is the expecting to find in the preſent circumſtances

ſtances of chriſtianity, a meaning for, or ſomething anſwering to, every appellation and expreſſion which occurs in ſcripture; or in other words, the applying to the perſonal condition of Chriſtians at this day, thoſe titles, phraſes, propoſitions and arguments, which belong ſolely to the ſituation of chriſtianity at its firſt inſtitution.

I am aware of an objection which weighs much with many ſerious tempers, namely, that to ſuppoſe any part of ſcripture to be inapplicable to us, is to ſuppoſe a part of ſcripture to be uſeleſs; which ſeems to detract from the perfection we attribute to theſe oracles of ſalvation.—To this I can only anſwer, that it would have been one of the ſtrangeſt things in the world, if the writings of the New Teſtament had not, like all other books, been compoſed for the apprehenſion, and conſequently adapted to the circumſtances, of the perſons they were addreſſed to; and that it would have been equally ſtrange, if the great, and in many reſpects the inevitable, alterations, which have taken place in thoſe circumſtances, did not vary the application of ſcripture language.

I deſign in the following diſcourſe to propoſe ſome examples of this variation, from which you will judge, as I proceed, of the truth and importance of our general obſervation.

1. At the time the ſcriptures were written, none were *baptized* but converts, and none were converted but from conviction, and conviction produced for the moſt part a correſponding reformation of life and manners.—Hence *Baptiſm* was only another name for converſion, and converſion

verſion was ſuppoſed to be ſincere—in this ſenſe was our Saviour's promiſe, "[1] he that believeth and is *baptized* ſhall be ſaved," and in the ſame his command to St. Paul, "[2] ariſe and be *batpized*, and waſh away thy ſins;" this was that *baptiſm* "for the remiſſion of ſins," to which St. Peter[3] invited the Jews upon the day of Pentecoſt; that "*waſhing* of regeneration," by which as St. Paul[4] writes to Titus "he ſaved us." Now when we come to ſpeak of the baptiſm which obtains in moſt chriſtian churches at preſent, where no converſion is ſuppoſed, or poſſible; it is manifeſt, that if theſe expreſſions be applied at all, they muſt be applied with extreme qualification and reſerve.

2. The community of Chriſtians were at firſt a handful of men connected amongſt themſelves by the ſtricteſt union, and divided from the reſt of the world by a real difference of principle and perſuaſion, and what was more obſervable, by many outward peculiarities of worſhip and behaviour.—This ſociety conſidered collectively, and as a body, were ſet apart from the reſt of mankind for a more gracious diſpenſation, as well as actually diſtinguiſhed by a ſuperior purity of life and converſation.—In this view, and in oppoſition to the unbelieving world, they were denominated in ſcripture by titles of great ſeeming dignity and import——they were "[5] elect," "called,"

[1] Mark xvi. 16.
[2] Acts xxii. 16.
[3] Acts ii. 38.
[4] Titus iii. 5.
[5] Rom. viii. 33. i. 6, 7.

" ſaints"—they were " [6] in Chriſt"—they were " [7] a choſen generation, a royal prieſt-" hood, a holy nation, a peculiar people."—That is, theſe terms were employed to diſtinguiſh the profeſſors of chriſtianity from the reſt of mankind, in the ſame manner as the names of Greek and Barbarian, Jew and Gentile, diſtinguiſhed the people of Greece and Iſrael from other nations. The application of ſuch phraſes to the whole *body* of chriſtians is become now obſcure; partly, becauſe it is not eaſy to conceive of chriſtians as a *body* at all, by reaſon of the extent of their name and numbers, and the little viſible union that ſubſiſts among them; and partly, becauſe the heathen world with whom they were compared, and to which compariſon theſe phraſes relate, is now ceaſed, or is removed from our obſervation.—Suppoſing therefore theſe expreſſions to have a perpetual meaning, and either forgetting the original uſe of them, or finding *that*, at this time, in a great meaſure exhauſted and inſignificant, we reſort to a ſenſe and application of them, eaſier it may be to our comprehenſion, but extremely foreign from the deſign of their authors, namely, to diſtinguiſh individuals amongſt us, the profeſſors of Chriſtianity from one another —agreeably to which idea the moſt flattering of theſe names, the " elect," " called," " ſaints," have by bold and unlearned men been appropriated to themſelves and their own party with a preſumption and conceit, injurious to the re-

[6] Rom. viii. 1. [7] 1 Pet. ii. ix.

putation

putation of our religion amongſt "them that are without," and extremely diſguſting to the ſober part of its profeſſors: whereas that ſuch titles were intended in a ſenſe common to all chriſtian converts is well argued from many places in which they occur, in which places you may plainly ſubſtitute the terms *convert* or *converted* for the ſtrongeſt of theſe phraſes, without any alteration of the author's meaning, e. g. "[1] dare any of you go to law before the unjuſt and not before the *ſaints?*" "[2] is any man *called* being circumciſed, let him not become uncircumciſed?" "[3] the church that is at Babylon *elected* together with you ſaluteth you"—"[4] ſalute Andronicus and Junia who were *in Chriſt* before me."

3. In oppoſition to the Jews who were ſo much offended by the preaching of the Goſpel to the Gentiles, St. Paul maintains with great induſtry, that it was God Almighty's intention from *the firſt* to ſubſtitute at a fit ſeaſon into the place of the rejected Iſraelites a ſociety of men taken indifferently out of all nations under heaven, and admitted to be the people of God upon eaſier and more comprehenſive terms—this is expreſſed in the Epiſtle to the Epheſians as follows; "[5] having made known to us the myſtery of his will, according to his good pleaſure which he hath *purpoſed in himſelf*, that in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, he might gather together in one all things in

[1] Cor. vi. 1. [2] vii. 18. [3] 1 Pet. v. 13. [4] Rom. xvi. 7.
[5] Eph. i. 9, 10. alſo ſee Eph. iii. 5, 6.

 Chriſt."

Chriſt."—The ſcheme of collecting ſuch a ſociety was what God *foreknew* before the foundation of the world; was what he did *predeſtinate*; was the *eternal purpoſe* which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus: and by conſequence this ſociety in their collective capacity were the objects of this *foreknowledge*, *predeſtination*, and *purpoſe*; that is, in the language of the apoſtles they were they "[1] whom he did *foreknow*," they whom he did "*predeſtinate*"— they were [2] *choſen in Chriſt* before the foundation of the world"—they were "[3] *elect* according to the *foreknowledge* of God the Father." This doctrine hath nothing in it harſh or obſcure.—but what have we made of it?—The rejection of the Jews, and the adopting another community into their place, compoſed, whilſt it was carrying on, an object of great magnitude in the attention of the inſpired writers who underſtood and obſerved it.—This event, which engaged ſo much the thoughts of the Apoſtle, is now only read of, and hardly that—the reality and the importance of it are little known or attended to—Loſing ſight therefore of the proper occaſion of theſe expreſſions, yet willing after our faſhion to adapt them to ourſelves, and finding nothing elſe in our circumſtances that ſuited with them, we have learnt at length to apply them to the final deſtiny of individuals at the day of judgment; and upon this foundation has been erected a doctrine, which lays the ax at once to the root of all religion,

[1] Rom. viii. 29. [2] Eph. i. 4. [3] 1 Pet. i. 2.

that

that of an abſolute appointment to ſalvation or perdition, independant of ourſelves or any thing we can do: and, what is extraordinary, thoſe very arguments and expreſſions, (Rom. Chap. ix. x. xi.) which the Apoſtle employed to vindicate the impartial Mercies of God, againſt the narrow and excluding claims of Jewiſh prejudice, have been interpreted to eſtabliſh a diſpenſation the moſt arbitrary and partial that could be deviſed.

4. The converſion of a grown perſon from heatheniſm to chriſtianity, which is the caſe of converſion commonly intended in the epiſtles, was a change of which we have now no juſt conception—it was a new name, a new language, a new ſociety; a new faith, a new hope; a new object of worſhip, a new rule of life; a hiſtory was diſcloſed, full of diſcovery and ſurpriſe; a proſpect of futurity was unfolded, beyond imagination awful and auguſt; the ſame deſcription applies in a great part though not entirely to the converſion of a Jew. —This accompanied as it was with the pardon of every former ſin, (Romans iii. 25.) was ſuch an æra in a man's life, ſo remarkable a period in his recollection, ſuch a revolution of every thing that was moſt important to him, as might well admit thoſe ſtrong figures and ſignificant alluſions by which it is deſcribed in ſcripture—it was a "[1] *regeneration*," or new birth—it was to be "[2] born again of God and of the ſpirit"—it was to be "[3] dead to ſin,"

[1] Tit. iii. 5. [2] John. i. 13. iii. 5. [3] Rom. vi. 2, 13.

and

and "alive from the dead"—it was to be "[1] buried with Chriſt in baptiſm, and raiſed together with him"—it was "[2] a new creature" and "[3] new creation"—it was a tranſlation from the conditions of "[4] ſlaves to that of ſons"—from "[5] ſtrangers and foreigners to be fellow citizens of the ſaints and of the houſhold of God."—It is manifeſt that no change equal or ſimilar to the converſion of a heathen can be experienced by us, or by any one educated in a chriſtian country, and to whom the facts, precepts and hopes of chriſtianity have been from his infancy familiar—yet we will retain the ſame language—and what has been the conſequence? One ſort of men obſerving nothing in the lives of chriſtians, correſponding to the magnificence if I may ſo ſay, of theſe expreſſions, have been tempted to conclude, that the expreſſions themſelves had no foundation in truth and nature, or in any thing but the enthuſiaſm of their authors.—Others again underſtand theſe phraſes to ſignify nothing more, than that gradual amendment of life and converſation, which reaſon and religion ſometimes produce in particular chriſtians—of which interpretation it is truly ſaid, that it degrades too much the proper force of language, to apply expreſſions of ſuch energy and import to an event, ſo ordinary in its own nature, and which is common to chriſtianity with every other moral inſtitution. Laſtly, a third ſort,

[1] Col. ii. 12. [2] 2 Col. v. 17. [3] Eph. iv. 24.
[4] Gal. iv. 7. [5] Eph. ii. 19.

in order to ſatisfy theſe expreſſions to their full extent, having imagined to themſelves certain perceptible impulſes of the Holy Ghoſt, by which, in an inſtant, and in a manner, no doubt ſufficiently extraordinary, they are "*regenerate* and *born of the ſpirit*—they become "*new creatures*"—they are made the "*ſons of God*," who were before the "*children of wrath*"—they are "*freed* from ſin," and "from death"—they are choſen, that is, and ſealed, without a poſſibility of fall, unto final ſalvation.—Whilſt the patrons of a more ſober expoſition have been often challenged, and ſometimes confounded with the queſtion.—If ſuch expreſſions of ſcripture do not mean *this*, what do they mean? To which we anſwer—nothing—nothing, that is, to us—nothing to be found, or ſought for in the preſent circumſtances of chriſtianity.

More examples might be produced, in which the unwary uſe of ſcripture language has been the occaſion of difficulties and miſtakes—but I forbear—the preſent are ſufficient to ſhow, that it behoves every one, who undertakes to explain the ſcriptures, before he determines to whom or what, an expreſſion is now a days to be applied, to conſider diligently whether they admit of any application at all; or whether it is not rather to be reſtrained to the preciſe circumſtances and occaſion for which it was originally compoſed.

I make no apology for addreſſing this ſubject to this audience; becauſe whatever relates

to

to the interpretation of ſcripture, relates, as I conceive, to us; for, if, by any light we may caſt upon thoſe ancient books, we can enable and invite the people to read the bible for themſelves, we diſcharge in my judgment the firſt duty of our function—ever bearing in mind that we are the miniſters not of our own fame or fancies, but of the ſincere goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt.

A D V I C E

ADDRESSED TO THE

YOUNG CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF CARLISLE,

IN A

SERMON,

PREACHED

AT A GENERAL ORDINATION HOLDEN AT ROSE-CASTLE,

JULY 29th, 1781.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT is recommended to thoſe who are preparing for holy orders, within the Dioceſe of Carliſle, to read *Collier's Sacred Interpreter*, and the four Goſpels with *Clark's Paraphraſe*; and to candidates for Prieſts orders, carefully to peruſe *Taylor's Paraphraſe on the Romans*.

ADVICE

ADDRESSED TO THE

YOUNG CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF CARLISLE.

1 TIM. IV. 12.

Let no Man deſpiſe thy Youth.

THE author of this epiſtle, with many better qualities, poſſeſſed in a great degree what we at this day call a *knowledge of the world*. He knew, that although age and honours, authority of ſtation, and ſplendor of appearance, uſually command the veneration of mankind, unleſs counteracted by ſome degrading vice, or egregious impropriety of behaviour; yet, that where theſe advantages are wanting, where no diſtinction can be claimed from rank, importance from power, or dignity from years; in ſuch circumſtances, and under the inevitable depreſſion of narrow fortunes, to procure and preſerve reſpect requires both care and merit. The apoſtle alſo knew, and in the text taught his beloved convert, that to obtain the reſpect of thoſe amongſt whom he exerciſed his miniſtry, was an object deſerving the ambition of a Chriſtian

teacher, not indeed for his own ſake, but for theirs, there being little reaſon to hope that any would profit by his inſtruction who deſpiſed his perſon.

If *St. Paul* thought an admonition of this ſort worthy of a place in his epiſtle to *Timothy*, it cannot ſurely be deemed either beſide or beneath the ſolemnity of this occaſion, to deliver a few practicable rules of life and behaviour, which may recommend you to the eſteem of the people, to whoſe ſervice and ſalvation you are now about to dedicate your lives and labours.

In the firſt place, the ſtations which you are likely, for ſome time at leaſt, to occupy in the church, although not capable of all the means of rendering ſervice and challenging reſpect, which fall within the power of your ſuperiors, are free from many prejudices that attend upon higher preferments. Interfering intereſts and diſputed rights; or where there is no place for diſpute, the very claim and reception of legal dues, ſo long as what is received by the miniſter is taken from the pariſhioner, form oftentimes an almoſt inſuperable obſtruction to the beſt endeavours that can be uſed to conciliate the good will of a neighbourhood. Theſe difficulties perplex not *you*. In whatever conteſts with his pariſhioners, the *principal* may be engaged, the *curate* has neither diſpute nor demand to ſtand between him and the affections of his congregation.

Another, and a ſtill more favourable circumſtance in your ſituation, is this; being upon a level with the greateſt part of your pariſhioners,

you gain an acceſs to their converſation and confidence, which is rarely granted to the ſuperior clergy, without extraordinary addreſs, and the moſt inſinuating advances on their parts. And this is a valuable privilege; for it enables you to inform yourſelves of the moral and religious ſtate of your flock, of their wants and weakneſſes, their habits and opinions, of the vices which prevail, and the principles from which they proceed: in a word, it enables you to ſtudy the diſtemper, before you apply the remedy; and not only ſo, but to apply the remedy in the moſt commodious form, and with the beſt effect; by private perſuaſion and reproof, by gentle and unſuſpected conveyances in the intimacy of friendſhip and opportunities of converſation. To this muſt be added the many occaſions, which the living in habits of ſociety with your pariſhioners affords you of reconciling diſſentions, healing animoſities, adminiſtering advice to the young and inexperienced, and conſolation to age and miſery. I put you in mind of this advantage, becauſe the right uſe of it conſtitutes one of the moſt reſpectable employments not only of our order, but of human nature; and leaves you, believe me, little to envy in the condition of your ſuperiors, or to regret in your own. It is true, that this deſcription ſuppoſes you to reſide ſo conſtantly, and to continue ſo long in the ſame pariſh, as to have formed ſome acquaintance with the perſons and characters of your pariſhioners; and what ſcheme of doing good in your profeſſion, or even of doing your duty, does not ſuppoſe this?

But whilſt I recommend a juſt concern for our reputation, and a proper deſire of public eſteem, I would by no means flatter that paſſion for praiſe and popularity, which ſeizes oftentimes the minds of young clergymen, eſpecially when their firſt appearance in their profeſſion has been received with more than common approbation. Unfortunate ſucceſs! if it incite them to ſeek fame by affectation and hypocriſy, or lead, as vanity ſometimes does, to enthuſiaſm and extravagance. This is not the taſte or character I am holding out to your imitation. The popular preacher courts fame for its own ſake, or for what he can make of it; the ſincerely pious miniſter of Chriſt modeſtly invites eſteem, only or principally, that it may lend efficacy to his inſtruction, and weight to his reproofs; the one ſeeks to be known and proclaimed abroad, the other is content with the ſilent reſpect of his neighbourhood, ſenſible that *that* is the theatre upon which alone his good name can aſſiſt him in the diſcharge of his duty.

It may be neceſſary likewiſe to caution you againſt ſome aukward endeavours to lift themſelves into importance, which young clergymen not unfrequently fall upon; ſuch as a conceited way of ſpeaking, new airs and geſtures, affected manners, a mimicry of the faſhions, language, and diverſions, or even of the follies and vices of higher life; a hunting after the acquaintance of the great, a cold and diſtant behaviour towards their former equals, and a contemptuous neglect of their ſociety. Nothing was ever gained by theſe arts, if they deſerve

deſerve the name of arts, but deriſion and diſlike—Poſſibly they may not offend againſt any rule of moral probity; but if they diſguſt thoſe with whom you are to live, and upon whom the good you do muſt be done, they defeat not only their own end, but, in a great meaſure, the very deſign and uſe of your vocation.

Having premiſed theſe few obſervations, I proceed to deſcribe the qualities which principally conduce to the end we have at preſent in view, the poſſeſſion of a fair and reſpected character.

And the firſt virtue (for ſo I will call it) which appears to me of importance for this purpoſe, is *frugality*. If there be a ſituation in the world in which profuſion is without excuſe, it is in that of a young clergyman who has little beſides his profeſſion to depend upon for his ſupport. It is folly—it is ruin—Folly, for whether it aim at luxury or ſhow, it muſt fall miſerably ſhort of its deſign. In theſe competitions we are outdone by every rival. The proviſion which clergymen meet with upon their entrance into the church, is adequate in moſt caſes to the wants and decencies of their ſituation, but to nothing more.—To pretend to more, is to ſet up our poverty, not only as the ſubject of conſtant obſervation, but as a laughing ſtock to every obſerver. Profuſion is ruin: for it ends, and ſoon too, in debt, in injuſtice, and inſolvency. You well know how meanly, in the country more eſpecially, every man is thought of who cannot pay his credit; in what terms he is ſpoken of, in what light he

is viewed, what a deduction this is from his good qualities, what an aggravation of his bad ones---what inſults he is expoſed to from his creditors, what contempt from all. Nor is this judgment far amiſs. Let him not ſpeak of honeſty, who is daily practiſing deceit; for every man who is not paid is deceived. Let him not talk of liberality, who puts it out of his power to perform one act of it.—Let him not boaſt of ſpirit, of honour, of independence, who fears the face of his creditors, and who meets a creditor in every ſtreet. There is no meanneſs in frugality: the meanneſs is in thoſe ſhifts and expedients, to which extravagance is ſure to bring men. Profuſion is a very equivocal proof of generoſity. The proper diſtinction is not between him who ſpends, and him who ſaves; for they may be equally ſelfiſh; but between him who ſpends upon himſelf, and him who ſpends upon others. When I extol frugality, it is not to praiſe that minute parſimony which ſerves for little but to vex ourſelves and thoſe about us; but to perſuade you to *æconomy upon a plan*, and, that plan deliberately adjuſted to your circumſtances and expectations. Set out with it, and it is eaſy; to retrieve, out of a ſmall income, is only not impoſſible. Frugality, in this ſenſe, we preach not only as an article of prudence, but as a leſſon of virtue. Of this frugality it has been ſaid, that it is the parent of liberty, of independence, of generoſity.

A ſecond eſſential part of a clergyman's character, is *ſobriety*. In the ſcale of human vices there

there may be ſome more criminal than drunkenneſs, but none ſo humiliating. A clergyman cannot, without infinite confuſion, produce himſelf in the pulpit before thoſe who have been witneſſes to his intemperance. The folly and extravagance, the rage and ribaldry, the boaſts and quarrels, the idiotiſm and brutality of that condition, will riſe up in their imaginations in full colours. To diſcourſe of temperance, to touch in the remoteſt degree on the ſubject, is but to revive his own ſhame. For you will ſoon have occaſion to obſerve, that thoſe who are the ſloweſt in taking any part of a ſermon to themſelves, are ſurpriſingly acute in applying it to the preacher.

Another vice, which there is the ſame, together with many additional reaſons, for guarding you againſt, is *diſſoluteneſs*. In my judgment, the crying ſin and calamity of this country at preſent, is licentiouſneſs in the intercourſe of the ſexes. It is a vice which hardly admits of argument or diſſuaſion. It can only be encountered by the cenſures of the good, and the diſcouragement it receives from the moſt reſpected orders of the community. What then ſhall we ſay, when they who ought to cure the malady, propagate the contagion. Upon this ſubject bear away one obſervation, that when you ſuffer yourſelves to be engaged in any unchaſte connection, you not only corrupt an individual by your ſolicitations, but debauch a whole neighbourhood by the profligacy of your example.

The habit I will next recommend, as the foundation

foundation of almoſt all other good ones, is retirement. Were I required to compriſe my advice to young clergymen in one ſentence, it ſhould be in this, learn to live alone. Half of your faults originate from the want of this faculty. It is impatience of ſolitude which carries you continually from your pariſhes, your home, and your duty; makes you foremoſt in every party of pleaſure and place of diverſion; diſſipates your thoughts, diſtracts your ſtudies, leads you into expence, keeps you in diſtreſs, puts you out of humour with your profeſſion, cauſes you to place yourſelves at the head of ſome low company, or to faſten yourſelves as deſpicable retainers to the houſes and ſociety of the rich. Whatever may be the caſe with thoſe, whoſe fortunes and opportunities can command a conſtant ſucceſſion of company, in ſituations like ours to be able to paſs our time with ſatisfaction alone, and at home, is not only a preſervative of character, but the very ſecret of happineſs. Do what we will, we muſt be much and often by ourſelves: if this be irkſome, the main portions of life will be unhappy. Beſides which, we are not the leſs qualified for ſociety, becauſe we are able to live without it. Our company will be the more welcome for being never obtruded. It is with this, as with many pleaſures, he meets it the oftneſt, and enjoys it the beſt, who can moſt eaſily diſpenſe with the want of it.

But what, you ſay, ſhall I do alone? reading is my proper occupation and my pleaſure, but books are out of my reach, and beyond my purchaſe.

purchaſe. They who make this complaint, are ſuch as ſeek nothing from books but amuſement, and find amuſement in none but works of narrative or imagination. This taſte, I allow, cannot be ſupplied by any moderate expence or ordinary opportunities: but apply yourſelves to ſtudy, take in hand any branch of uſeful ſcience, eſpecially of thoſe parts of it which are ſubſidiary to the knowledge of religion, and a few books will ſuffice; for inſtance, a commentary upon the New Teſtament read ſo as to be remembered, will employ a great deal of leiſure very profitably. There is likewiſe another reſource which you have forgot, I mean the compoſition of ſermons. I am far from refuſing you the benefit of other men's labours; I only require that they be called in not to flatter lazineſs, but to aſſiſt induſtry. You find yourſelf unable to furniſh a ſermon every week, try to compoſe one every month: depend upon it you will conſult your own ſatisfaction, as well as the edification of your hearers; and that however inferior your compoſitions may be to thoſe of others in ſome reſpects, they will be better delivered, and better received; they will compenſate for many defects by a cloſer application to the ways and manners, the actual thoughts, reaſoning and language, the errors, doubts, prejudices and vices, the habits, characters, and propenſities of your congregation, than can be expected from borrowed diſcourſes—at any rate you are paſſing your time virtuouſly and honourably.

With retirement, I connect reſerve; by which

which I mean, in the firſt place, ſome degree of delicacy in the choice of your company, and of refinement in your pleaſures. Above all things keep out of public houſes—you have no buſineſs there—your being ſeen to go in and out of them is diſgraceful---your preſence in thoſe places entitles every man who meets you there, to affront you by coarſe jeſts, by indecent or opprobrious topics of converſation——Neither be ſeen at drunken feaſts, boiſterous ſports, late hours, or barbarous diverſions—Let your amuſements, like every thing about you, be ſtill and quiet and unoffending. Carry the ſame reſerve into your correſpondence with your ſuperiors. Purſue preferment, if any proſpects of it preſent themſelves, not only by honourable means, but with moderate anxiety. It is not eſſential to happineſs, perhaps not very conducive—were it of greater importance than it is, no more ſucceſsful rule could be given you, than to do your duty quietly and contentedly, and to let things take their courſe. You may have been brought up with different notions, but be aſſured, that for once that preferment is forfeited by modeſty, it is ten times loſt by intruſion and importunity—Every one ſympathiſes with neglected merit, but who ſhall lament over repulſed impudence?

The laſt expedient I ſhall mention, and in conjunction with the others, a very efficacious one towards engaging reſpect, is ſerioufneſs in your deportment, eſpecially in diſcharging the offices of your profeſſion. Salvation is ſo awful a concern, that no human being, one would think,

think, could be pleaſed with ſeeing it, or any thing belonging to it, treated with levity. For a moment, in a certain ſtate of the ſpirit, men may divert themſelves, or affect to be diverted, by ſporting with their moſt ſacred intereſts; but no one in his heart derides religion long.—What are we, any of us?—Religion will ſoon be our only care and friend. Seriouſneſs therefore in a clergyman is agreeable, not only to the ſerious, but to men of all tempers and deſcriptions. And ſeriouſneſs is enough: a prepoſſeſſing appearance, a melodious voice, a graceful delivery, are indeed enviable accompliſhments; but much, we apprehend, may be done without them. The great point is to be thought in earneſt. Seem not then to be brought to any part of your duty by conſtraint, to perform it with reluctance, to go through it in haſte, or to quit it with ſymptoms of delight. In reading the ſervices of the church, provided you manifeſt a conſciouſneſs of the meaning and importance of what you are about, and betray no contempt of your duty, or of your congregation, your manner cannot be too plain and ſimple. Your common method of ſpeaking, if it be not too low, or too rapid, do not alter, or only ſo much as to be heard diſtinctly. I mention this, becauſe your elocution is more apt to offend by ſtraining and ſtiffneſs, than on the ſide of eaſe and familiarity. The ſame plainneſs and ſimplicity which I recommend in the delivery, prefer alſo in the ſtyle and compoſition of your ſermons. Ornaments, or even accuracy of language, coſt the writer much trouble, and

produce

produce ſmall advantage to the hearer. Let the character of your ſermons be truth, and information, and *a decent particularity*—Propoſe one point in one diſcourſe, and ſtick to it; a hearer never carries away more than one impreſſion—diſdain not the old faſhion of dividing your ſermons into heads—in the hands of a maſter, this may be diſpenſed with; in yours, a ſermon which rejects theſe helps to perſpicuity, will turn out a bewildered rhapſody, without aim or effect, order or concluſion. In a word, ſtrive to make your diſcourſes uſeful, and they who profit by your preaching, will ſoon learn, and long continue to be pleaſed with it.

I have now finiſhed the enumeration of thoſe qualities which are required in the clerical character; and which, wherever they meet, make even youth venerable, and poverty reſpected; which will ſecure eſteem under every diſadvantage of fortune, perſon, and ſituation, and notwithſtanding great defects of abilities and attainments. But I muſt not ſtop here: a good name, fragrant and precious as it is, is by us only valued in ſubſerviency to our duty, in ſubordination to a higher reward. If we are more tender of our reputation, if we are more ſtudious of eſteem than others, it is from a perſuaſion, that by firſt obtaining the reſpect of our congregation, and next by availing ourſelves of that reſpect, to promote amongſt them peace and virtue, uſeful knowledge and benevolent diſpoſitions, we are purchaſing to ourſelves a reverſion and inheritance valuable above all price, important beyond every other intereſt or ſucceſs.

Go then into the vineyard of the goſpel, and may the grace of God go with you. The religion you preach is true. Diſpenſe its ordinances with ſerioufneſs, its doctrines with ſincerity —urge its precepts, diſplay its hopes, produce its terrors—" be ſober, be vigilant"—" have a good report"—confirm the faith of others, teſtify and adorn your own, by the virtues of your life, and the ſanctity of your reputation—Be peaceable, be courteous; condeſcending to men of the loweſt condition—" apt to teach, willing to communicate," ſo far as the immutable laws of truth and probity will permit, " be every thing unto all men, that ye may gain ſome."

The world will requite you with its eſteem. The awakened ſinner, the enlightened ſaint—the young whom you have trained to virtue, the old whom you have viſited with the conſolations of Chriſtianity, ſhall purſue you with prevailing bleſſings, and effectual prayers. You will cloſe your lives and miniſtry with conſciences void of offence, and full of hope.—To preſent at the laſt day even one recovered ſoul, reflect how grateful an offering it will be to *him*, whoſe commiſſion was to ſave a world—infinitely, no doubt, but ſtill only in degree, does our office differ from *his*—himſelf the firſt born, it was the buſineſs of his life, the merit of his death, the council of his father's love, the exerciſe and conſummation of his own, " to bring many brethren unto glory."

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